

REMARKS

The title has been amended as required by the Examiner. Claim 1 has been amended to address the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ryosuke (JP 2000-306226) in view of Kasamatsu et al. (US 5,841,608). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, because the cited references, even if combined, still would not disclose or suggest the claimed pads as described in the claims.

More specifically, independent claims 1 and 12 describe that the pads of the present invention includes a first height, a second height and an inclined upper end surface extending from the first height to the second height. The upstream end of the inclined upper end surface is higher in level than the downstream end.

The Examiner properly acknowledges that Ryosuke does not disclose the claimed pads of the present invention. The Kasamatsu et al. reference in FIG. 28 teaches a projection 74 including a horizontal top portion 74a and a tapered portion 86 extending from both upstream and downstream ends of the top portion completely to the plane 73 of the slider 71.

In the present invention, the inclined upper end surface extends from first height of the pad to the second height, which is above the surface of the rails. The Kasamatsu et al. reference, on the other hand, teaches a projection having a tapered portion which extends from the top of the projection all the way to the surface or plane of the slider, and not to a second height, as in the present invention. For this reason, claims 1-3 and 12 are allowable over the cited references.

Independent claims 4 and 13 recite that each of the pads includes a base pad and an auxiliary pad formed on the base pad. The Examiner properly recognizes that the Ryosuke reference does not disclose this feature. FIG. 24 of Kasamatsu et al. shows a projection 74 and a number of “minute irregularities” formed on the surface of the disk 77 and on the top portion 74(a) of the projection (see also col. 25, lines 10-12). Applicant respectfully submits that the interpretation of FIG. 28 of Kasamatsu et al. which show the same irregularities as in FIG. 24, as disclosing the auxiliary pads are overly broad as to be improper. The irregularities shown in the Kasamatsu et al. reference does not disclose or suggests the auxiliary pads that are formed on the base pads. Claims 4-6 and 13 are believed to be allowable for this reason.

The Examiner contends that the Kasamatsu et al. reference also discloses the claimed inclination angle, which is less than or equal to the pitch angle in flying the slider, as described in claims 1 and 5. FIG. 28 of Kasamatsu et al. shows that the tapered portion 86 is inclined against the magnetic disk 77 to make an acute angle between the tapered portion 86 and the magnetic disk 77, so that the lubricant is forced out from the clearance between the

projection 74 and the magnetic disk 77 and moved up along the surface of the tapered portion 86 by the function of a capillary cohesion of the lubricant for the tapered portion 86 (see col. 28, lines 13-19). This simply does not disclose or suggest that the claimed inclination angle which is less than or equal to the pitch angle in flying the slider. With this arrangement of the present invention, the lowest point of the slider in the flying condition is not changed regardless of the fact that the height of the pad on the upstream side is greater than the height of the downstream side. For this reason, claims 2 and 5 are also allowable over the cited references.

For the all reasons given above, the present invention is now believed to be allowable, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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